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TAGS: [AU](#) [KPKO](#) [MR](#) [PREL](#) [SO](#)
SUBJECT: [PEACEKEEPING](#) IN SOMALIA: POSSIBLE MAURITANIAN
INTEREST

REF: ADDIS ABABA 23

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Charles H. Twining for Reason 1.4 (b,d
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¶1. (C) During the course of a January 9 discussion with Armed Forces Chief of Staff Colonel Abderrahmane Ould Boubacar on the role of the military in a democratic Mauritania, we asked about interest in peacekeeping. The country's current role is limited to fielding twenty observers in the AU force in Darfur. The Colonel replied that the GIRM would like to become much more involved in peacekeeping in the future, both as a way of broadening the experience of its troops and improving their performance. He said he hoped the U.S. could assist in developing Mauritania's peacekeeping capability. We agreed that it would be an appropriate role for us and other friends of Mauritania to play, assuming the remainder of the election process and transition to a new civilian government goes smoothly.

¶2. (C) We asked whether consideration is being given to participating in a Somali peacekeeping operation (reftel). The Chief of Staff said it is entirely possible, though he was not sure how many troops he could come up with immediately. As his personnel's Arabic language capability has proved to be an advantage in Darfur, he felt that it would be similarly advantageous in Somalia. Were Mauritania to participate in a Somali operation, major needs would be in the areas of materiel and logistics support.

¶3. (C) Comment. While it was not our purpose in talking to him, once it was broached the Colonel in no way dismissed the possibility of contributing troops for a Somalia force. Indeed, from looks around the room we had the feeling that we were hardly the first to ask about it. While not applicable to the immediate future, the DATT will provide some thoughts through DOD channels of a possible post-transition program to consider developing Mauritanian capabilities.
Twining